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TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

September 21, 2015

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
101 8th Street
Oakland, CA 90607

Dear Chair Cortese, Vice-Chair MacKenzie, and MTC Commissioners.

**Re: Functional Consolidation of Planning Departments; MTC
Commission Meeting, September 23, 2015**

Silicon Valley at Home (SV@Home) is the voice of affordable housing for Silicon Valley communities. Our founding members include Google, LinkedIn, Applied Materials, MidPen Housing Corporation, EAH Housing, the Knight Foundation, and many more. Our members are among those that drive the Bay Area economy and also include nonprofit entities that provide housing and services to those most in need. SV@Home was created to lead efforts to secure funding sources, support stronger land use policies, and to change the conversation around housing across Silicon Valley communities.

On behalf of our members, I write to share our perspective on the proposal to blend the MTC and ABAG planning departments into a single planning department as outlined in Mr. Heminger's memo dated September 18, 2015.

The lack of affordable housing is a significant regional issue. The lack of adequate affordable housing exacerbates our traffic patterns and reinforces the pattern of social inequity affecting the entire region. Addressing our affordable housing problem is central to maintaining our region's competitive advantage. Case in point-- transit-oriented affordable housing was a central component of the recently completed Regional Prosperity Plan cited as an example under the Economic Development unit of the proposed Integrated Planning Section (page 5 of the Heminger memo).

SV@Home supports efforts to create a more efficient, meaningful, and equitable regional planning process whether through the integrated planning department being proposed or via the merger of both regional agencies into a single entity.

Blending planning departments is a step in the right direction. However, addressing the region's housing needs effectively within a regional transportation agency requires thoughtful consideration of how the agency's mission, organizational structure, and policy priorities need to change to



reflect its expanded role. To that end, we offer the following recommendations for the Commission's consideration.

1. Formally acknowledge MTC's role and commitment to addressing the lack of affordable housing, displacement, and transportation issues as part of its stated mission and name.
2. Integrate affordable housing priorities throughout all five units: Regional Planning and Policy; Local Planning and Implementation; Equity and Sustainability; Data and Analytical Services; and Economic Development.
3. Direct MTC and ABAG staff to jointly develop a set of recommendations for how to effectively prioritize and address affordable housing issues through a blended planning department within MTC.
4. Restore MTC's full contribution to the ABAG budget for 2015/2016.
5. Form a Study Commission that includes regional nonprofit stakeholders to develop options for a single regional planning entity that is tasked with addressing our regional housing, displacement, and transportation goals.

SV@Home is committed to working with both regional agencies to improve our regional planning functions in a way that respects the work and commitment demonstrated by staff from both agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pilar", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Pilar Lorenzana-Campo
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Cc

Steve Heminger, MTC Executive Director
Julie Pierce, ABAG Chair
Ezra Rapport, ABAG Executive Director